

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00  
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 EB-07  
COME-00 TRSE-00 EPG-02 /061 W  
-----130329Z 087472 /15

O R 130250Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3546  
INFO USLO PEKING  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
CINCPAC HONO HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 2782

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, TW, CH  
SUBJECT: NEWSWEEK ARTICLE ON GROC ATTITUDE TOWARD PRC

REF: TAIPEI 2472

SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES IT NOTEWORTHY THAT SOME OF RECENT  
ARTICLES REPORTED IN STORY IN MAY 9 ASIAN EDITION NEWSWEEK  
WERE PRINTED AND THAT MAGAZINE ITSELF CONTAINING THAT STORY  
IS CIRCULATING FREELY HERE. BUT ARTICLE DOES CONCLUDE TOO  
MUCH WHEN IT INTERPRETS RECENT ITEMS IN TAIPEI PUBLICATIONS  
AND TRADE ACTIVITIES AS SIGNALING A SIGNIFICANT SOFTENING IN  
THE GROC'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CONTACTS WITH THE PRC.

1. AN ARTICLE ON TAIWAN IN THE MAY 9 NEWSWEEK (ASIAN EDITION)  
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SPECULATES THAT THE GROC MAY BE SOFTENING ITS  
OPPOSITION TO CONTACTS BETWEEN THE ROC AND THE PRC.  
THE ARTICLE ADMITS THAT THE GROC'S OFFICIAL STAND IS  
STILL UNCOMPROMISINGLY AGAINST SUCH CONTACT, BUT  
ARGUES THAT A NUMBER OF RECENT "DOVISH" ARTICLES IN  
THE "STRICTLY CONTROLLED TAIWAN PRESS" SUGGEST THAT  
TAIPEI MAY BE TESTING THE WATERS REGARDING CONTACTS

WITH AND POSSIBLE ASSOCIATION WITH THE PRC.

2. WE HAVE SEEN THE ARTICLES NEWSWEEK REFERS TO, AND DO NOT BELIEVE TOO MUCH SHOULD BE MADE OF THEM. IN RECENT WEEKS, BOTH THE DAILY AND PERIODICAL PRESS HAVE CARRIED ARTICLES DEALING IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WITH CHINA'S FUTURE, BUT MOST OF THEM HAVE MANAGED TO ACHIEVE THE DEGREE OF BLAND GENERALITY EXPECTED HERE OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES ON POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE SUBJECT. TWO ARTICLES IN THE APRIL JEN CHIEN SHIH ("HUMANIST"), HOWEVER, REPRESENTED SOME DEPARTURE FROM THE USUAL. THEY NOT ONLY RIDICULED THE CIRCUMSPECTION OF THE OTHER RECENT ARTICLES, BUT WENT ON TO ARGUE THAT ONLY FOREIGN IMPERIALISTS AND THE LOCAL ESTABLISHMENT WHICH COOPERATES WITH THEM BENEFITTED FROM THE CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO: I.E., A DIVIDED CHINA. BOTH ARTICLES URGED THAT THE TWO CHINAS RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AFTER TWO WEEKS OF OPEN SALE, GROC AUTHORITIES TOOK JEN CHIEN SHIH OFF THE STANDS. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE TWO ARTICLES ALONE WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY OFFENSIVE, BASED ON CURRENT PRESS GUIDELINES, TO JUSTIFY THE CONFISCATION. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ARTICLES' APPEARANCE IN THE FIRST PLACE CAN BE VIEWED AS ANY KIND OF SIGNAL FROM THE GROC. THERE IS GENERALLY NO PRE-PUBLICATION CENSORSHIP FOR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, AND WHILE THE MANAGEMENT

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OF JEN CHIEN SHIH PROBABLY KNEW THEY WOULD RUN RISKS IN PUBLISHING THE ARTICLES, THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE GROC KNEW IN ADVANCE OF THE ARTICLES' CONTENT AND SPECIFICALLY PERMITTED THEIR PUBLICATION. THE TWO-WEEK DELAY BETWEEN PUBLICATION AND CONFISCATION CAN PROBABLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE OFTEN SLOW INTERNAL CENSORSHIP BUREACURACY AND THE FACT THAT THE ARTICLES APPEARED IN A MINOR JOURNAL AND EXCITED VERY LITTLE LOCAL INTEREST. IT APPEARS TO US THAT THE TWO ARTICLES (WE UNDERSTAND THEY ARE BOTH THE PRODUCT OF MAINLANDER AUTHOR LI CH'ING-JUNG) WERE PROMPTED IN PART BY WHAT THEIR AUTHOR MIGHT HAVE INTERPRETED AS A RECENT GREATER LICENSE TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM.

4. WHAT INTRIGUES US IS NOT THE LOCAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLES, BUT THE FACT THAT NEWSWEEK'S INTERPRETATION OF THEIR PUBLICATION HAS BEEN FREELY AVAILABLE IN TAIPEI. IN CONTRAST TO LOCAL PUBLICATIONS, WE BELIEVE FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS ARE CLOSELY INSPECTED

BEFORE INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION IS PERMITTED. EVEN  
THOUGH WE BELIEVE THAT GROC PRESS GUIDELINES ARE  
GRADUALLY LOOSENING UP, IT IS CERTAINLY A DEPARTURE  
FROM PAST PRACTICE (A WELCOME ONE) FOR THE GROC TO  
ALLOW AN ARTICLE LIKE THE ONE APPEARING IN THE  
MAY 9TH NEWSWEEK TO CIRCULATE HERE. ONE EXPLANATION  
WE HAVE HEARD IS THAT THE GROC NOW IS TAKING THE  
VIEW THAT SINCE THE LOCAL WESTERN-EDUCATED CHINESE  
(I.E., NEWSWEEK'S RELATIVELY SMALL MARKET)  
ARE NO DOUBT ANTI-PRC AND COMMITTED TO THE ROC IN  
ANY CASE, HEAVY-HANDED CENSORSHIP OF FOREIGN  
PUBLICATIONS THEY READ IS UNNECESSARY AND WOULD BE  
COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. (IN THIS VEIN, WE NOTE A MAY 11  
EDITORIAL IN THE CHINA NEWS WHICH COMMENTS ON THE  
NEWSWEEK ARTICLE, DMITTING THAT WHILE "SOME OF OUR  
COUNTERPROPAGANDA METHODS OF THE PAST WERE CRUDE  
AND INEFFECTIVE,... OUR PEOPLE ARE TO BE TRUSTED.  
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WE DON'T HAVE TO SUPPRESS EVERY STORY WITH WHICH WE  
DISAGREE NOR STAMP 'BANDIT' ON EVERY PICTURE OF MAO  
OR HUA KUO-GENG.")  
UNGER

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## Message Attributes

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